

ADMIN LETTER # C.S 3-01

TO: COUNTY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES

SUBJECT: REVISED STANDARDS

DATE: November 15, 2001

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 1, 2001

ATTENTION: Children's Services Social Workers

Children's Services Supervisors

Attached to this letter is a revised edition of the **Standards for Children's Services** to become effective 12/01/01. The revision includes five new Standards and ten revised Standards. The new edition is being issued as a result of the federal Child and Family Services Review conducted in March, 2001. All revisions are in bold type. With the addition of the new Standards, the numbering has changed. Please destroy the previously issued **Standards for Children's Services** dated July, 2000 and begin using the attached revised **Standards for Children's Services**. The Program Management Standards will remain the same.

A. New Standards

1. Identical Allegation Made During CPS Investigative Assessment-Standard #18

If the report contains the **same, exact information as that being currently investigated**, the information is documented in the case record and is considered a part of the fact-finding process of the current investigation. Notices to the reporters must be sent. If the case decision is made to substantiate, one Family Risk Assessment Worksheet is completed. One DSS 5104 is completed. This information is not considered a new report.

2. New Allegations Made During CPS Investigative Assessment-Standard #19

If **new allegations are made during the investigative assessment** that meet the definitions of abuse, neglect and/or dependency, the information is not counted as a separate report, but must be responded to within appropriate time frames to assess the safety of the child. All applicable Standards must be met to ensure the child's safety.

The information gathered as a result of the new allegations must be incorporated into one case decision. All appropriate notices must be sent. One DSS 5104 will be completed. If the report is substantiated, one Risk Assessment Worksheet is completed.

3. New Allegations Made During Case Planning and Case Management (CP&CM) or Foster Care/Child Placement Services- Standards #33 and #54

If an allegation and/or incident that meets the definition of abuse, neglect and/or dependency is made during the course of Case Planning and Case Management or Foster Care/Child Placement Services, **it is always counted as a new report**. All aspects of a thorough investigative assessment must be completed. The case decision must include all information gathered during the fact finding process. One DSS-5104 is completed. If the report is substantiated, one Risk Assessment Worksheet is completed. All notices must be sent.

4. Child Well-Being Information in Case Planning and Case Management-Standard #36

As a part of the comprehensive assessment conducted by the Case Planning and Case Management social worker, the family and child's educational, physical and mental health needs must be assessed and, when applicable, addressed. This is our first attempt to capture this information in CP&CM. We acknowledge that it is not a safety/risk issue, but information we should have in order to complete a thorough assessment of the family. If the family needs assistance in meeting any of these identified needs, we should attempt to provide the information, services or referrals needed to meet the need. For example, if the parent has not provided preventive dental care for the child because of finances, the social worker would provide the name and telephone number of a local dentist that accepts Medicaid.

Please Note: The lack of adherence to the Well-Being issues would not be a reason to initiate court proceedings against the parent as it was not a part of the substantiation or seen as a risk/safety concern. If issues need to be addressed, they may be included in the Family Services Case Plan, but they are not reasons to keep the case open when it would otherwise be closed for services.

B. Revised Standards

Some of the revisions to existing Standards were made to reflect legislation passed during the 2001 General Assembly Session and to comply with the newly

updated Section 1205 of the Child Placement manual. Other Standards contain clarifying language.

I. Language and/or Legislative Changes

- **Standard #17 has not been renumbered, but does contain a language change.**

This change substitutes the word "uncovered" for "revealed", clarifying that information that the CPS worker becomes aware of during an investigative assessment must be addressed and the safety of the child assessed.

- **Old Standard #33 has been revised and renumbered to #37.**

The revision to this Standard adds language specifying that the child, age 12 years or older and cognitively and emotionally able to participate, should be a part of the development of the Family Services Case Plan, the Service Agreement.

- **Old Standard #49 has been revised and renumbered to #53.**

The only change to this Standard is to note that it becomes effective 01-01-02.

- **Old Standard #81 has been revised and renumbered to #86.**

The revision to this Standard is made to comply with new legislation reducing the time period for initiating a Termination of Parental Rights proceeding from 15 to 12 of the most recent 22 months, effective 01-01-02.

- **Old Standard #83 has been revised and renumbered to #88.**

The revision to this standard involves the insertion of the word "court's". The insertion of this word clarifies the

requirement that the court must make the decision about abandoning reunification efforts.

- **Old Standard #94 has been revised and renumbered to #99.**

This change brings the Standard into line with new legislation regarding voluntary placement agreements with unemancipated youth in foster care. The revision shortens the time period from 180

consecutive days to 90 consecutive days within which the initial review hearing is to be held. The revision also requires a petition to be filed prior to the end of the second 90 days.

- **Old Standard #95 has been revised and renumbered to #100**

This change substitutes the word "self-sufficiency" for "independent living".

- **Old Standard #97 has been revised and renumbered to #102**

This revision requires services to be offered at least every six months to a youth who is in foster care and sixteen years of age or older. The revision also inserts the name "LINKS" in place of "independent living".

II. Substantive Revisions

There are two major changes to some Standards and they are listed below:

- **Old Standard #57 has been revised and renumbered to #61.**

Standard #61 now requires the development of a LifeBook for any child removed from his/her home and provides guidelines for LifeBook content.

- **Old Standard #56 has been revised and renumbered to #67.**

This revision requires that a visitation plan among siblings be developed within one week of the children coming into care

and mirrors Standard #66 relating to visits between parents and children.

Please make sure that all child welfare staff are informed of these changes and receive any necessary clarification and training. If you have questions relating to the **Standards for Children's Services**, please your CPR or the Children's Services Policy and Initiatives Team at (919) 733-4622. Thank you for your attention to these important changes.

Sincerely,

Charles C. Harris, Chief Children's Services Section

[Attachment](#)-Standards for Children's Services-Program Management

[Attachment](#)-Standards for Service Delivery

cc: Pheon Beal

Sherry Bradsher

Children's Services Team Leaders

Children's Services Program Representatives